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AUTHOR White, William D.
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ABSTRACT

Year round school programs are more difficult to implement in secondary schools because of the nature of teaching and the seasonal organization of extracurricular activities in high schools. There is no one year round program that is desirable for all schools. When considering a year round program for the first time the following variables should be considered: (1) the number of attendance terms; (2) the number of vacation periods available in the calendar; (3) the number of holidays to observe; (4) the number of attendance tracks; and (5) the number of students released per vacation. A second set of factors to be considered are the stipulations placed upon the school calendar by the local school district. The year round program enacted by the Jefferson County (Colorado) system was a plan with six attendance terms (concept 6), offering each student two vacations during the year. Three year round school models (with a detailed analysis of the concept 6 plan) are presented from the study conducted by the Year Round School Study Committee of Jefferson County. The models are: (1) the four quarter year round high school schedule; (2) the five term year round high school schedule; and (3) the concept-6 year round program (six term year). An eight point list of "Do's and Dont's" to be considered when changing to year round high school schedules is also provided. (MD)

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INITIATING AND ADMINISTERING A YEAR-ROUND PROGRAM IN YOUR SECONDARY SCHOOL

Presented January 25, 1985
National Council on Year Round Education

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by

William D. White, Ed.D.

School districts have had more difficulty in implementing year-round school programs in secondary schools than in elementary schools. This happens because of the nature of departmentalized teaching and the seasonal organization of extra-curricular activities at the high school level. Elementary programs seldom require the presence of a particular child with a specialized staff member except for the handicapped. High school students must meet a select array of subject matter specialists each day and this must be scheduled with an appropriate match in each instance that ensures quality instruction and is cost effective. The information offered here is intended to assist planners in meeting the special problems of the high school in designing extended year schedules.

When considering a year-round school program for the first time the planners in a school system should consider the variables which affect the design of the extended school year calendar. There is no one system of year-round education which is desirable for all communities and all localities. As climates vary and as the social and economic patterns of a community are different one from another, the type of calendar which the school system can best utilize will be different as well. Each school district then is advised to study its own local conditions, look at the ingredients which can be utilized to develop a calendar suited to their particular needs, and tailor-make a program that will offer the greatest educational benefits to the boys and girls in the schools.

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The number of attendance terms is the first factor which the planners of a year-round school calendar should consider. School districts traditionally have had two terms or semesters on the nine-month calendar. But in the year-round plan the calendar may be divided into three, four, five, six, or even more attendance terms. The sequential periods of instruction which are most desirable to the staff and community are the necessary criteria for determining the number of attendance terms to be used. Secondly, the number of vacations available in the calendar is a variable to consider. Traditionally there has been a single three-month vacation with a number of holidays throughout the year. A year-round school calendar may have two, three, four, or even five vacations during the course of a year. The third item to consider is the number of holidays that will be observed in the calendar and this varies from one region to another depending upon the religious, social, and economic background of the community that is involved. The fourth variable is the number of attendance tracks into which the students will be scheduled. This is a variable which helps to determine the economy in a program. The traditional calendar has a single track of students, but two, three, or four different attendance tracks may be used. It should be remembered, however, that the larger the number of attendance tracks the more subdivisions of the student population will be required during any attendance term.

The final variable, the number of students released per vacation, is a dependent variable which is determined by the number of attendance tracks. If there are four tracks, 25% of the students can be released to vacations during each season of the year. If there are only three tracks, however, 33 1/3% of the students can be released and, therefore, a greater gain in economy can be achieved. This latter arrangement will produce a gain in rated capacity of the school of 50%.

The second set of factors to consider in a year-round school plan are the stipulations which the local school district may place upon its calendar. In the Jefferson County Colorado school system it was stipulated that certain conditions would have to be met in the year-round school calendar which would utilize the existing program and preserve a K-12 feeder system. The stipulations were as follows:

1. The year-round school calendar must apply to all students within a feeder system K-12.

2. The calendar must preserve family unity so that all students within a family vacation at the same time.

3. The quality of the educational program in operation at the beginning of the pilot program must continue to be met throughout the pilot stage.

4. Freedom of choice in the selection of vacation patterns must be offered to families.

5. The present curriculum would need to be used during the pilot phase. There were no additional funds available for developing a curricular program to accommodate any newly established year-round operation.

6. The calendar must be flexible for students in order that they receive the amount of education their personal need would require. There would be a minimum school year of 172 days and a maximum school year of up to 235 days.

7. There must be efficient use of buildings. A release of significant portion of the student population during each season of the year is sought in order to gain economy in the use of building space. A gain in rated building capacity of 50% was necessary to take some schools off of double sessions.

An additional set of stipulations observed in the Jefferson County pilot were as follows:

1. The minimum school year that could be observed under Colorado State Law was 172 days.

2. The minimum number of holidays acceptable to the parents in the Jefferson County Schools system were 11 holidays.

3. The length of attendance term in which teachers and students would pursue a single series of instructional units was 43 days.

4. The length of the basic contract year for teachers was 184 days.

A wide range of year-round school models were studied and evaluated by the Year-Round School Study Committee in Jefferson County. They began with the Four-Quarter Plan, the Five-Quarter Plan, and the 45/15 Year-Round School Calendar. Each of these programs seemed to have certain merits but also deficiencies which the Jefferson County Schools teachers and parents felt undesirable for their purposes in secondary schools. After all the conceivable models of year-round calendars were studied, the plan which divided the year into six attendance terms offering each student two vacations during opposite seasons of the year seemed to be most desirable. A primary factor in selecting this planned called Concept 6 was the fact that 33 1/33% of the students could be released to vacations at a time giving a maximum economy and also that there were no staggered entry dates for students during their attendance terms. All programs of instruction going on during any term would have students in the same stage of learning as the programs of instruction were pursued. This latter condition was also met by the Four-Quarter and Five-Quarter Plans. In recent years some states have begun to require an 180-day school year which works to the disadvantage of the Concept 6 model and compels the reconsideration of the Four-Quarter and Five-Quarter Plans. Since these two plans are still quite workable and worth considering in high schools contemplating year-round programs a brief description of their characteristics will follow before going on to a detailed look at Concept 6.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS FOR A FOUR-QUARTER YEAR ROUND HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Holidays . . . . . 4 days
Extended School Year . . . . . 4 quarters of 60 days each
Students attend 180 days . . . . . 3 out of 4 quarters
Days of School Operation . . . . . 240 days
Length of Quarter . . . . . 60 days
Curriculum is divided into 3 trimesters

Four-quarter Calendar for 1985-86:

Quarter 1: July 8 through September 30
Holiday - September 2 - Labor Day

Quarter 2: October 1 through December 24
Holiday - November 28 - Thanksgiving

Winter Vacation - December 25 through January 1 (8 days)

Quarter 3: January 2 through March 27
Holiday - February 17 - Presidents' Birthday

Quarter 4: March 28 through June 20
Holiday - May 26 - Memorial Day

Summer Vacation - June 23 through July 4 (16 days)

Articulation Plan for High School Curriculum On a Four-Quarter Year Round Schedule

Although the days of school operation are divided into four equal numbers of days which may be called quarters, the curriculum must be plotted to match the days required for student attendance. Since each student attends three of the four quarters the curriculum must be offered in sequence in three equal parts which are called trimesters. Trimester 1 precedes trimester 2 and all the courses of the curriculum required for the students in attendance during trimester 1 must be offered in order for them to proceed to trimester 2.

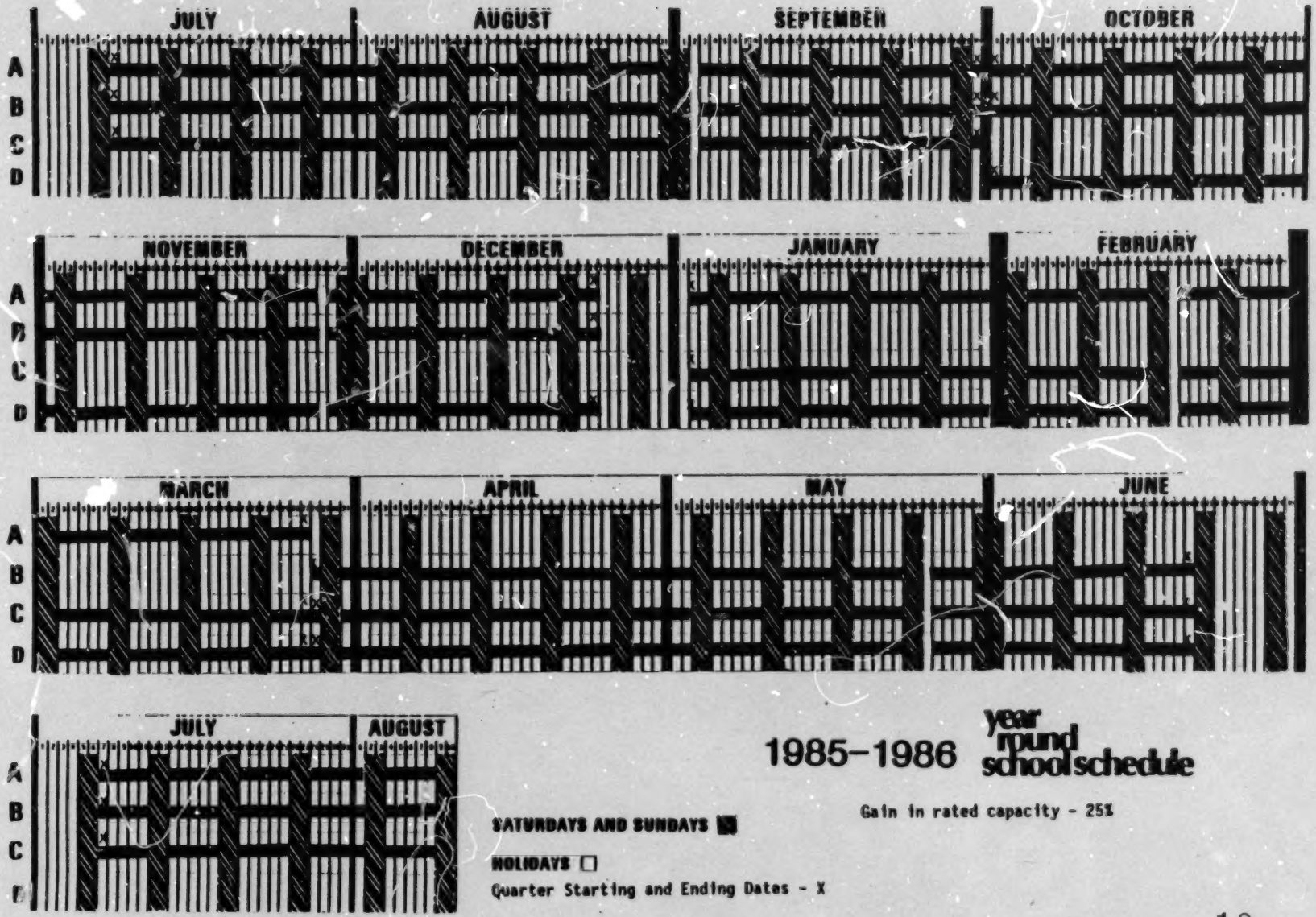
It is desirable in the year round high school to avoid dividing the courses up by tracks. This is particularly important in offering singleton courses or advanced electives. Since the number of faculty available to teach these courses is limited, it is better to have the option of scheduling students freely among tracks of students at the beginning of each quarter. In the four-quarter year round high school only two different sequences of curriculum are necessary to accommodate students attending on the four tracks (see Fig. 1). In the diagram which follows it will be noted that the curriculum is offered for tracks A, B and C starting on July 8. Track D students are on vacation until October 1 and, therefore, they regain a curriculum sequence which begins on October 1. As students on Tracks A, B and C return from vacation in subsequent quarters, they pick up the sequence in curriculum with Track D students.

Figure 1

Articulation Plan for Four-Quarter Year Round Curriculum

	Quarter 1 July8/Sept.30	Quarter 2 Oct.1/Dec.24	Winter Vacation	Quarter 3 Jan.2/Mar.27	Quarter 4 Mar.28/June20	Summer Vacation
Track A	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	(8 days)	Trimester 3	Vacation	(17 days)
Track B	Trimester 1	Trimester 2		Vacation	Trimester 3	
Track C	Trimester 1	Vacation		Trimester 2	Trimester 3	
Track D	Vacation	Trimester 1		Trimester 2	Trimester 3	

The four-quarter plan permits the release of 25% of the student membership to vacations each quarter. When the building is operated at maximum efficiency the rated capacity of the school building can be increased by 33%. In this calendar each student attends 180 days but the school is in operation 240 days of the year. One holiday occurs during each quarter and include Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Presidents' Day, and Memorial Day.



1985–1986 year round school schedule

Gain in rated capacity - 25%

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS FOR A FIVE-TERM YEAR ROUND HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Holidays. . . . . .6 days
Extended School Year Pattern. . . .5 terms of 45 days each and recess after each term
Students' school year 180 days. . .Attend 4 terms and vacation one term
Days of School Operation. . . . . .225 days
Length of Term. . . . . .45 days
Curriculum is divided into 4 quarters.

Five-term calendar for 1985-86:

Term 1: August 5 through October 7
Holiday - September 2 - Labor Day
Recess October 8 through October 13 (6 days)

Term 2: October 14 through December 17
Holidays - November 28, 29 - Thanksgiving
Winter Vacation December 18 through December 29 (12 days)

Term 3: December 30 through March 3
Holiday - January 1 - New Year's Day
Recess March 4 through March 9 (6 days)

Term 4: March 10 through May 9
Holidays - 0
Recess May 10 through May 14 (5 days)

Term 5: May 15 through July 18
Holidays - May 26, Memorial Day, July 4, Independence Day
Summer vacation July 19 through August 3 (16 days)

Articulation Plan for High School Curriculum On A Five-Term Year Round Schedule

In this plan the school year is div ded into five terms which are 45 days in length. Each is followed by a recess of 5 or 6 days to provide a respite before the next term begins. This also permits a winter break of 12 days and a summer vacation of 16 days for all students and teachers. The individual student attend 4 of the 5 terms and has an extended vacation during one term of 45 days.

The curriculum is offered in two sequential patterns, one starting August 5 and the other starting on October 14. All the courses in the curriculum must be made available during these two sequences if every student is to have equal access to the full range of course offerings. This does not present a problem for larger high schools, however, where the enrollment is large enough to support two or more sections of every class. In Figure 2 below it can be seen that Tracks A, B, C and D start together in Term 1 while Track E vacations. Then Tracks B through E finish together in the fifth term while Track A vacations.

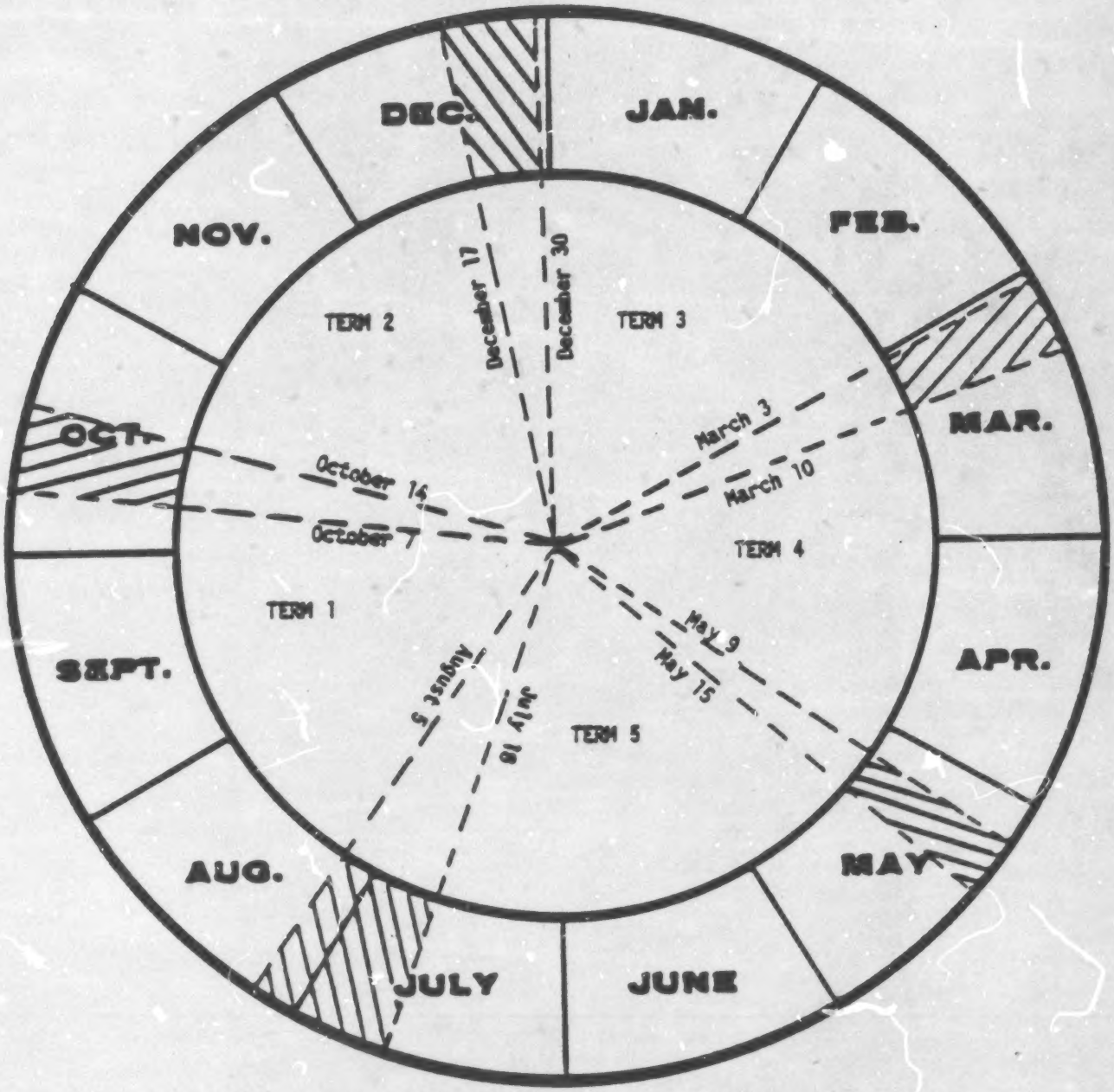
Figure 2.

Articulation Plan for Five Term Year Round Curriculum

	Term 1 Aug. 5/ Oct. 7	Term 2 Oct. 14/ Dec. 17	Winter Vacation	Term 3 Dec. 30/ Mar. 3	Term 4 Mar. 10/ May 9	Term 5 May 15/ July 18	Summer Vacation
Track A	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	(12 days)	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Vacation	(16 days)
Track B	Quarter 1	Quarter 2		Quarter 3	Vacation	Quarter 4	
Track C	Quarter 1	Quarter 2		Vacation	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Track D	Quarter 1	Vacation		Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Track E	Vacation	Quarter 1		Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	

The five term plan permits the release of 20% of the student membership of the school to vacations each term. If the building is operated at full efficiency, the rated capacity of the school can be increased by 25%. Each student attends a minimum school year of 180 days but the school operates 225 days of the year. There are holidays during the instructional terms observed for Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day. If additional holidays must be observed by the community, the additional days can be taken from the recess days provided at the end of each term. The recess days, which are highly desired by teachers, also permit time for building maintenance work and for staff inservice training activities which do not interrupt instructional time with students.

FIVE QUARTER
YEAR ROUND HIGH SCHOOL



Holidays. . . . . 6 days
Length of Term. . . . . 45 days
Student School Year . . . .180 days
Days of School Operation. .225 days
Students Attend 4 Terms
Gain in rated building capacity - 25%

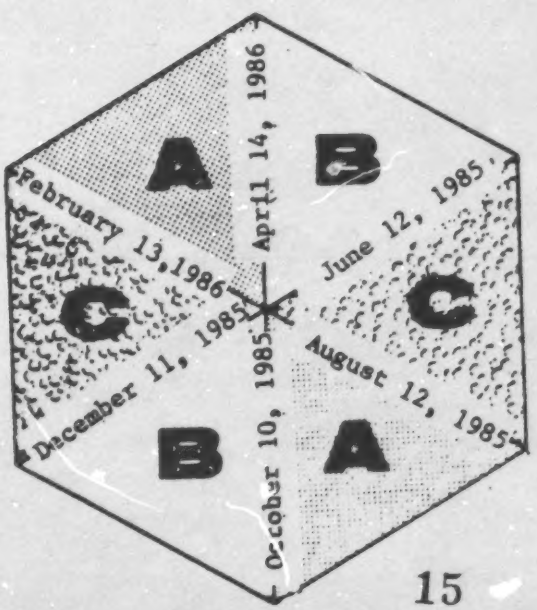
Recess after each Term. . .5 or 6 days
Curriculum Organization . .4 quarters
Curriculum Sequence . . . .2 tracks
Winter Vacation . . . . . .12 days
Summer vacation . . . . . .16 days

The Concept 6 Year-Round Program for K-12 Districts

The year-round school program was initiated July 30, 1974 in the Jefferson County Public Schools, Lakewood, Colorado. Sixteen of the 112 schools in the District were involved. These 16 schools had a combined enrollment of more than 13,000 students. They were in the Arvada West and Columbine attendance areas.

Concept 6 was put into effect after nearly three years of study and planning by parents, students, teachers, and school administrators. Under Concept 6 the school year was divided into six terms. Students attended two consecutive 43-day terms, vacationed for one term, and then continued to repeat this pattern.

Key features included the option for all children in a family to be on the same attendance track regardless of grade level, preservation of existing quality teaching methods, opportunity for enrichment or remedial instruction during vacation periods, and more economical use of existing school buildings which traditionally were not used three months of the year. The program received a two-year trial and was evaluated annually by the Jefferson County Board of Education. When it proved successful it was extended to other schools in Jefferson County. The diagram below shows the dates on which vacation terms begin in 1985 and 1986:



Between January 1974 and March 1975 students were allowed to select Track A, Track B, or Track C. Since March 15, 1975, however, school principals have been given authority to assign tracks to new students. This is being done to provide equal educational opportunities for students in all three tracks. New students who had a brother or sister who were enrolled prior to this date were permitted to select their track to maintain family unity.

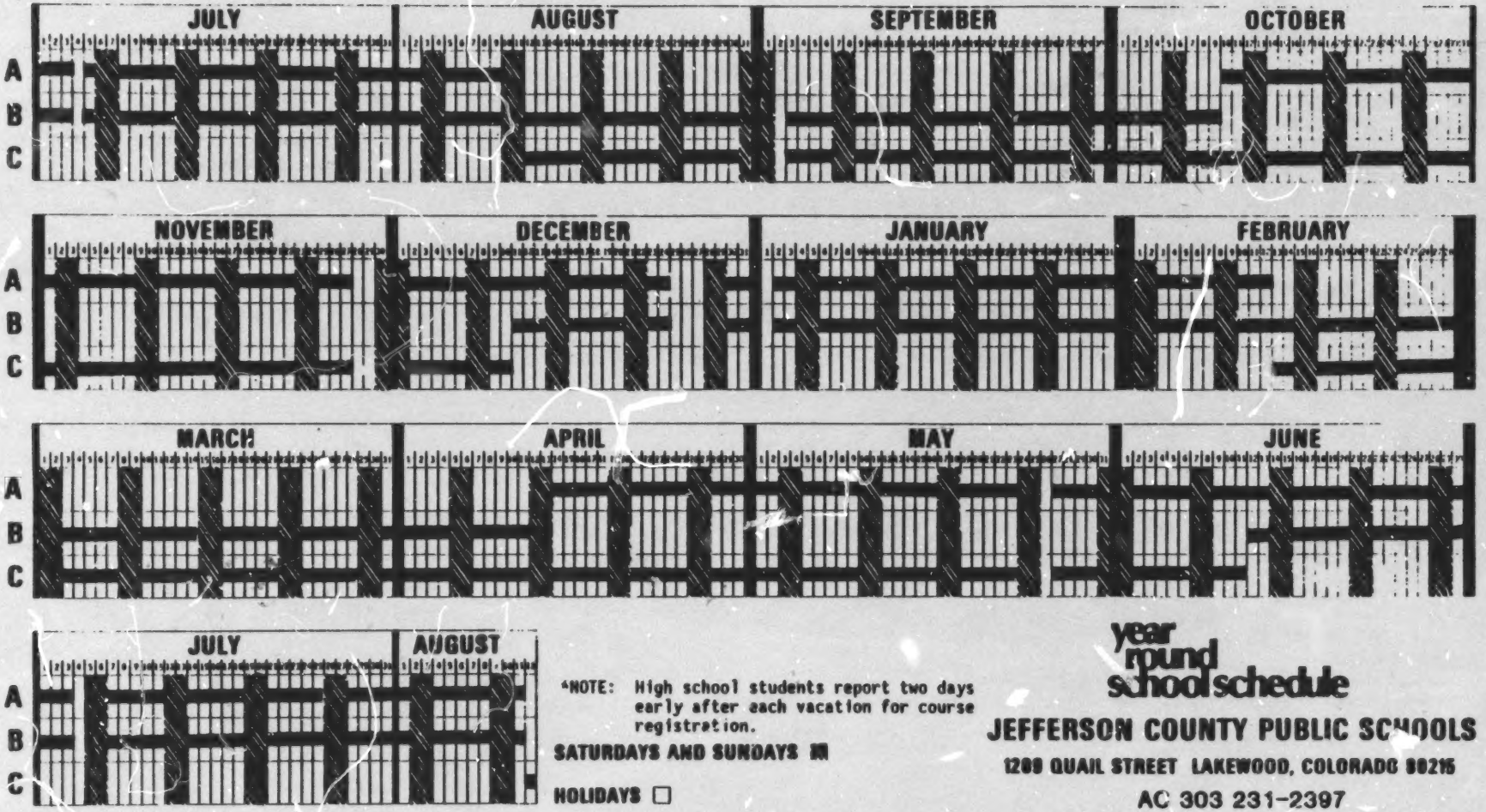
The usual plan is for the student to attend four of the six terms during any one 12-month period. Depending upon the availability of space and the needs of the student, an opportunity is available in some schools for attendance for a fifth term.

Educational benefits which the Concept 6 program seemed to offer were the opportunity for students to attend a fifth term when they desired enrichment or remedial work and the addition of bonus learning sessions or intersessions during vacation times. The bonus learning sessions were seen as one of the strongest features of a year-round school calendar which would allow schools to extend the range of educational opportunities for their boys and girls.

The basic intent of the bonus learning sessions were twofold. First, they would provide an opportunity for youngsters to attend additional periods of education voluntarily during their vacations for the purposes of enrichment, acceleration, or remediation. Secondly, they would provide an opportunity for extending the time the individual student requires for mastery.

The purposes of the bonus learning sessions were to extend to the local school options to the required curriculum. Secondly, they permitted the local staff the opportunity for intervention in behalf of the students with special needs. Third, they answered a desire to humanize the school through extension of teacher/pupil contacts in a variety of activities appealing to the interests and talents of the students.

1985–1986



*NOTE: High school students report two days early after each vacation for course registration.

SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS ▨

HOLIDAYS □

year round school schedule

JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1209 QUAIL STREET LAKEWOOD, COLORADO 80215

AC 303 231-2397

The development of bonus learning session activities became the responsibility of each individual school. It was the first genuine attempt of each school to develop a program exclusively for its own local community needs. These learning activities were generated through the processes of 1) teacher/student/parent involvement; 2) extensive use of community resources, talent, and space; and 3) the approval of this alternative curriculum granted through the office of the local principal.

Planning and Revising Curriculum

In revising curriculum for a year round school program it is usually necessary to break the curriculum up into small segments of nonsequential units. This procedure was followed in developing the curriculum for this purpose, however, very little additional these funds were necessary in revising the curriculum for this K-12 program. Most of the additional budget funds were spent in developing the intersession program called bonus learning sessions. Teachers during their regular planning times were able to revise the curriculum sufficiently well for the implementation of a K-12 pilot program involving more than 14,000 students. The final revision of the instructional program resulted in an open access curriculum which had the following characteristics:

1. Six entry times per year;
2. A fifth term attendance option;
3. Partial or full schedule of students each term.
4. Kindergarten entry of each child when he or she is ready. This is established through testing to determine pupil readiness.

Program Design Elements for an Extended School Year Program:

1. Skills instruction based on a continuum of objectives;
2. Multi-age grouping;
3. Individualized teaching strategies;
4. Staff organized into teaching teams;
5. Extensive use of community resources;

6. Coordinated planning with youth agencies.

Methods of Eliminating Constraints of Sequence in a Year-Round Curriculum:

1. Concentrate prerequisite information in one unit offered repeatedly;
2. Operate an open laboratory throughout the year with prerequisite materials available;
3. Offer intersessions during vacation periods with prerequisite material available;
4. Schedule courses in large blocks of time for one quarter. Total immersion of students into required materials;
5. Combine all levels in a single class and individualized instruction.

Educational Benefits Under the Concept 6 Calendar:

1. Kindergarten pupil entry times are closer to date of birth.
2. Eliminates the year-long failure;
3. Eliminates the learning plateau in the last quarter of the traditional school year.
4. Facilitates continuous progress plan of education.
5. Optional fifth quarter allows disadvantaged students to catch up.
6. Outdoor Laboratory School and Planetarium programs are offered to more students throughout the year.
7. Allows gifted students to explore and/or accelerate.
8. Eliminates time consuming rites of opening and closing school.

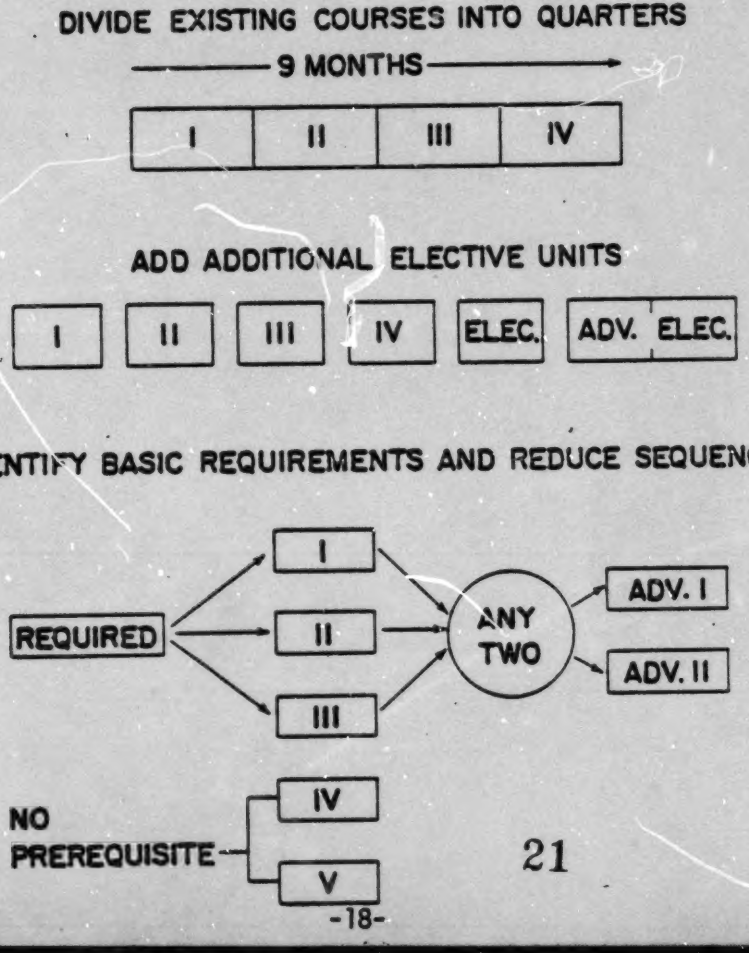
Bonus Learning Sessions Provide Opportunities For:

1. Personalized instruction in specific learning areas;
2. Instruction in basic skills--reading, computation tailored to the needs of the individual;
3. Mini courses related to student interest;
4. On-the-job training;
5. Dramatic, music, and fine arts festivals;
6. Outdoor Education Laboratory experience;
7. Activities sponsored by recreation districts and youth agencies;

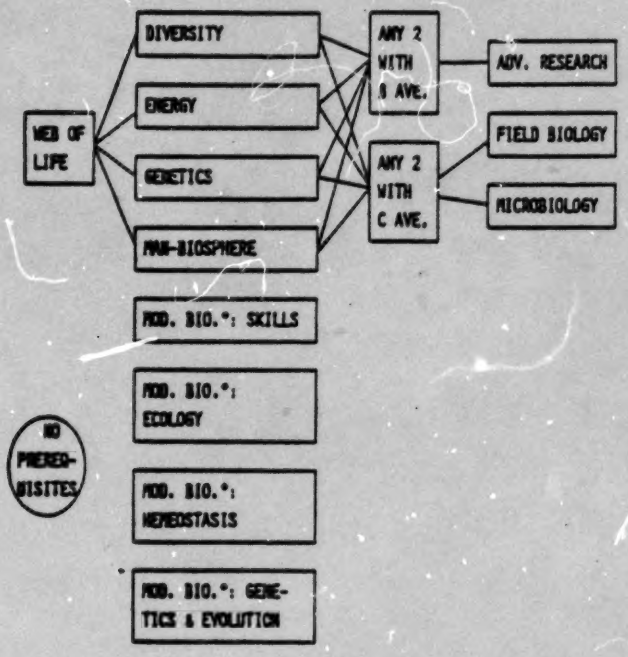
8. School-community sponsored service project;
9. School sponsored foreign travel.

To revise the curriculum for the year-round program we simply took the existing courses and divided them into quarters. Then we added elective units which teachers believed should be included. Finally, we developed an introductory quarter course in those programs where prerequisite information or skills were required. Required units or quarter courses were offered repeatedly throughout the year so students entering at various times could have access to any course regardless of their track assignment. Most of the quarter courses at the secondary level were nonsequential and all were 43 days in length. In Biology the Web of Life was required for a student to establish basic literacy in the subject. Then a series of nonsequential quarters are taken before the student qualifies for the advanced units. In American History any unit may be taken in any order.

REVISING CURRICULUM FOR CONCEPT 6



CONCEPT 6 - BIOLOGY QUARTER CURRICULUM OPTIONS



CONCEPT 6 - SENIOR HIGH AMERICAN HISTORY

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT QUARTER CURRICULUM OPTIONS

- COLONIAL AMERICA AND REVOLUTION
- CONFEDERATION: FEDERALISM AND NATIONALISM
- AMERICAN FRONTIER
- INDUSTRIAL AMERICA
- AMERICAN CHARACTER: THE 1920'S AND 1930'S
- 20TH CENTURY U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
- DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND PHILOSOPHIES
- LIBERTIES UNDER THE CONSTITUTION
- STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
- STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- MINORITIES IN AMERICA

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SOME DO'S AND DON'TS

1. Pilot year-round programs should be small rather than large. There are too many adjustments to be made which vary from school to school for a large number of schools to be supported initially.

2. The principal and key staff members in the pilot school should be the chief spokespersons for the program. No District level spokesperson can have sufficient credibility with each local school community. Principals need the freedom to adapt the plan to their operation.

3. Community opposition is certain but local staff support and a well informed citizens' advisory committee are the keys to success.

4. Curriculum revision is not a major problem if the school is familiar with the quarter organization and scheduling of courses at the secondary level.

5. Rumor is the greatest enemy of a school planning to operate year-round. An active local school information plan is essential.

6. An evaluation plan which compares pre-pilot data with current pilot school data has many difficulties. So many adjustment factors must be added from one year to the next it clouds the results.

7. Budgets for pilot operations should be clearly justified. There is a tendency for spending authorities to ask for more than they need to get the job done.

8. Arena scheduling procedures seem to be the best approach at the junior and senior high levels. This permits the resolution of schedule conflicts during the scheduling process.